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STATE CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF CAPE COD RAIL TRAIL REHABILITATION PROJECT

BREWSTER—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. today joined with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian A. Bowles, representatives from the Cape Cod Commission and MassBike, and local officials to celebrate the completion of the \$7.4 million the Cape Cod Rail Trail Rehabilitation Project. A speaking program at Nickerson State Park was followed by guided bike tours of the rail trail's new features.

The event marked the completion of the second and final phase of the project to rehabilitate the 22-mile trail which originally opened in 1978. Because the trail is so popular constructions work was done in phases so the trail would remain open during tourism season on the Cape. Phase 2 construction covered the 11.5 miles of trail from Nickerson State Park in Brewster to LeCount Hollow Road in South Wellfleet. Phase 1 was completed in June 2006 and covered the first 10.5 miles of the trail, from South Dennis to Brewster.

Major improvements made to the trail include:

- repaving and widening of the asphalt trail surface
- upgrading and widening the trail's shoulder for hiking and equestrian use where feasible
- selective removal of invasive tree species and hazardous trees
- installation of a root barrier to protect the new pavement
- planting of native species to enhance wildlife habitat along the trail
- installation of new trail signage and amenities such as seating areas and picnic tables
- innovative safety features installed at numerous trail-roadway intersections

The intersections along the rail trail were realigned with slight curves to make trail use safer for trail users and motorists by slowing approaching cyclists, shortening the distance needed to cross, and enhancing visibility.

Textured brick divisional islands were also built, to guide cyclists away from the bollard posts at each intersection, as well as to provide a visual cue that there is a roadway ahead. This unique intersection treatment is being implemented for the first time and is expected to serve as a new model for rail trail safety.

"As people have become more dependent on cars for daily transportation, the Cape Cod Rail Trail offers Cape Cod residents and visitors a welcome alternative for bicycle commuting, physical fitness, and outdoor recreation," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles. "Upgrading the trail also presented a unique opportunity for collaboration between the Office of

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Coastal Zone Management's Wetlands Restoration Program and the DCR and other partners to restore 16 acres of degraded salt marsh."

The project also included salt marsh restoration work at Namskaket Creek on the Brewster/Orleans town line. A blocked culvert at the creek was replaced, which will improve tidal flow, ecological health and fish passage conditions to the salt marsh habitat located there. Eroding embankments were stabilized with native grasses and plants to further enhance the health of the ecosystem and quality of wildlife habitat.

"June is Great Outdoors Month in Massachusetts, a perfect time to reopen one of the Commonwealth's premier outdoor recreational facilities," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. "The Cape Cod Rail Trail is one of the oldest and most popular rail trails in the nation and this comprehensive rehabilitation project has restored it to a state-of-the-art condition with major structural and safety improvements that will enhance the experience of over 400,000 people who use it every year."

The project was funded by \$6.4 million in state funding and \$1 million in federal Public Lands Highways funds from the Federal Highway Administration, secured by the Massachusetts Highway Department and the Massachusetts Congressional delegation.

"I am pleased to have helped secure the federal funding to revitalize the Cape Cod Rail Trail," said Congressman William D. Delahunt. "These improvements will ensure that future generations will continue to enjoy this scenic and peaceful place for exercise and recreation. I am excited to join with the Cape Delegation as we seek to expand the network of bike paths all around Cape Cod. I particularly wish to extend my appreciation and thanks to the staff and employees of the Department of Conservation and Recreation for their efforts in bringing this project to fruition."

In addition to the health and environmental benefits provided by the rail trail, it is also a valuable economic and transportation resource for Cape Cod, boosting local business revenues, improving property values, and connecting residential areas, commercial centers, schools, and more.

"At the Cape Cod Commission, we strive to promote alternatives to car travel," said Cape Cod Commission Transportation Director Bob Mumford. "Thousands of people use the Cape Cod Rail Trail not only for recreation, but also to commute to work, go shopping and get to tourism destinations in the summer. The rail trail is helping to take cars off of Cape Cod roads without negatively impacting the local economy."

"MassBike is pleased and encouraged to see projects like this re-construction going forward throughout Massachusetts," said Rob Miceli, President of the Cape Cod chapter of MassBike. "Our thousands of members statewide have a vested interest in the development of facilities that promote the use of the bicycle as a means of transportation, a means to reduce fuel consumption and carbon emission deposits while being a healthy way to get outdoors and enjoy beautiful places like Cape Cod and the Islands."

The salt marsh restoration work was funded by the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Wetland Restoration Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod. The Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership also provided expertise during the planning and design of the salt marsh restoration.

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